



Final Assessment: Course Reflection Responses

Overview

Throughout this course, you have examined teaching with technology.

For your final examination, you will write five short responses about the course activities, considering the outcomes and the extent to which the outcomes will influence your role as an educational technology leader in your school and district.

After submitting your responses in the course, you will also copy and paste your responses to a new page on your wiki.

Rubric

Task(s)	Accomplished	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Unacceptable
Improvement Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The responses offer detailed analysis and unique insights into how the team worked together and includes thoughtful ideas for how the project can be improved. (maximum 90 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The responses offer basic analysis and insight into how the team worked together and ideas for how the project can be improved. The responses have some depth but tend to address surface issues and/or lack substance and creativity. (maximum 80 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The responses are generically stated, lacking depth or nuance with little to no attention given to analysis or insight. (maximum 70 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The responses lack analysis and insight.
Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses are relevant to course content with few or no errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. The student followed APA style. (maximum 10 points)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses do not reflect knowledge of course content, lack clarity and depth, and/or include multiple errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The student does not following APA style.

Instructions

For the course Final, you will reflect on what you have learned in this course. Assume that you are a school or district technology specialist, coordinator, director, or leader. From that vantage point, compose a 150-word response to each of the five prompts below.

- Write in a narrative, reflective style instead of in a question and answer style.
- Be sure you follow APA guidelines.
- Copy and paste your responses from this document to your wiki.

Course Reflection Prompts

Respond in the expandable boxes below. Remember to copy and paste your responses to your wiki.

1. What outcomes had you envisioned for this course? Did you achieve those outcomes? Did the actual course outcomes align with those that you envisioned?

When I began the *Teaching with Technology* course, I expected to learn about methodologies to better integrate technology into teaching and learning. I also expected to learn more about the use of interactive technologies, including perhaps blogs and wikis, to implement many of the assignments. I expected frequent interaction with my classmates to learn technology-based team-teaching methodologies. From the titles of our required textbooks, I also inferred we would be using some new Web 2.0 tools and was anxious to learn more about them.

I was initially concerned over working with classmates in different districts and on different schedules, especially during the hectic holiday season when we are all so busy with extra-curricular events and activities. My fear was that this would make it difficult to achieve the course outcomes. However, as the class progressed, we were introduced to Google Docs. The ability to work collaboratively using Google Docs accommodated our varying schedules, made brainstorming and consensus building much easier, and allowed our team to easily attach documents and embed links and files. Despite the fact that Google Docs is designed to make outside communication via email or instant messaging almost unnecessary as everyone can work in the document simultaneously and instantly see progress, my team continued to regularly send clarifying emails regarding the Google Doc and other aspects of our classwork. This reliance on email did not affect achieving the desired outcome on our group project, and in our case supported the collaboration on the document and gave us all the comfort of keeping everyone up-to-date and on-task using a method that was both familiar and readily accessible within our schools and homes.

Regarding the anticipated outcome of learning more about Web 2.0 tools, that outcome was achieved through not only the extensive use of wikis and blogs but also through the use of Adobe desktop video conferencing (which I had not previously experienced). New tools included UDL (Universal Design for Learning) lesson and book-building sites. These tools contributed further to learning how to use Web 2.0 applications to meet the diverse needs of our students through multiple educational approaches using embedded, varied and ongoing assessment.

Overall, the actual course outcomes exceeded my expectations, as I learned about important theories of education including constructivism and connectivism. This foundation of knowledge on how learning occurs for students enlightened me on the best approaches to use technology to enhance learning and improve assessment, as well as on the ways our different brain networks learn and process information.

2. To the extent that you achieved the outcomes, are they still relevant to the work that you do in your school? Why or why not?

All the outcomes I achieved during this class have been relevant to my work as a technology director. Learning how the different brain networks decode and comprehend information will be invaluable, enabling me to better assist my teachers as they develop differentiated instruction using technology. The background I now have on major learning theories, including constructivism and connectivism, will allow me to better understand how to improve technology-based instruction while making the instructional process more meaningful, allowing students to build upon their existing knowledge base while forming connections to new information.

My hands-on experience with Web 2.0 tools, including the extensive use of wikis, blogs and desktop videoconferencing, has made me more confident in my ability to mentor this skill for my teachers. The experience with Google Docs and UDL (Universal Design for Learning) Book Builder has also provided me with a solid foundation on interactive multimedia authoring and web collaboration tools.

The most relevant knowledge I gained during this course deals with assessment; I will now focus on helping teachers use technology to provide varied and ongoing opportunities for assessment, embedded within instruction, that provide students opportunities for constant feedback to help them connect their efforts to their progress. I am also more aware of the need to design assessment in various ways to accommodate different learning styles, so that the assessment measures student's knowledge of the subject matter and not their test-taking or "bubbling" skills.

3. What outcomes did you not achieve? What prevented you from achieving them?

The only outcome I have not yet fully achieved is to embrace Google Docs as a fully self-contained, standalone method for collaborating online. Despite using the Google Doc for our brainstorming and scaffolding, I found I needed the comfort of communicating via email regarding progress or major changes to the Google Doc. When I send an email, I know my recipient has received my intended message, whereas I often doubted that some key information, especially comments within the Google Doc, were being read by all my team members.

This reliance on email is likely due to my comfort and experience level with email. As a technology director, I communicate primarily through email, and send and receive dozens of messages throughout the day. I also know that once when I send out an email, no one can change my message; I had concerns (though unjustified) over other team members inadvertently altering key information before all team members saw it or responded.

I believe that with sufficient time and experience, I will come to embrace Google Docs more fully as a standalone communications and collaboration tool. Fewer emails were sent between team members as our class progressed, so this provides evidence that we all began to depend more upon the Google Doc for communications as well as project development as we became comfortable and familiar with this technology.

4. Were you successful in completing the course assignments? If not, what prevented or discouraged you?

Overall, I feel I was successful in completing the course assignments. The discussion postings and protocols were the same as I had experienced in other classes. The use of wikis every week was good practice to prepare us for integrating them into classroom instruction; the same goes for the use of our blogs. Even the Adobe desktop videoconferencing was easy to participate in and very informative, despite some initial trouble getting my camera activated.

The only assignment I have been troubled by is the group project. Part of this stems from a lack of the ongoing feedback and connection between effort and results we have talked about needing to implement for our students; this is the final day of class, and yet I have not received grades on Assignment 2 for any week since week 2. Without more recent feedback, I feel unclear on whether our group project is really on track or not.

Despite a detailed rubric and guiding questions, I would also feel more successful in implementing and completing the group project if we had been provided an example. In fact, if it could be done without influencing the projects, I would have found it very helpful to see a sample of an acceptable group project and an unacceptable group project. Based on the conversations among my team members, I believe we all felt uneasy about whether or not our project has hit the mark.

Finally, a big impediment to success was the changing of our final class dates and due dates during the middle of this course. We started the class with an end date of December 20, and later were told the end date was moved up to December 18. With the extra activities most teachers and staff face during the holiday season, this caused much concern among my team. Although we have been granted permission to submit assignments through December 20, some team members felt rushed, and the confusion and stress of the date changes definitely impacted our assignments, particularly our group assignment. It would be a big help for all of us as students, and a major stress reliever, to avoid this situation in the future if possible.

5. What did you learn from this course: about yourself, your technology and leadership skills, and your attitudes?

During this course, I learned that it is more difficult to lead a team when you have only written communication to go on. We interacted via email and especially through our shared Google Doc, and at several points, it was hard to interpret the true intentions or desires of team members based on the written word alone. In a face-to-face or verbal interaction, you can infer what people want, and their attitude toward a project, through facial expression or verbal intonation. I learned I had to be very careful in the way I worded my messages and in the way I read their communications to be sure clarity and intent were communicated – there is a tendency for all of us to “hear what we want” when the secondary meaning clues are removed. This lesson will make me a better leader in my District, particularly when conducting online meetings.

I learned during the project that although my technology skills are well developed, using these skills to construct an interactive, multimedia lesson is more difficult than I thought. Just as knowing how to write does not insure you have the expression skills needed to be an author, having technology skills alone is not sufficient to promote true integration of technology to teachers in a way that transforms instruction; it is critical to understand educational theory and pedagogy. Depending on my team members, and trusting their educational experience to help design instructionally appropriate lessons infused with differentiation opportunities through technology, led to the development of much better lessons than I could ever have created alone.

Although I have always had an open mind and a positive attitude regarding teaching with technology and using “digital native” tools, during this course my attitude toward student assessment changed. I never thought of a video game as a constant, realtime, ongoing assessment with immediate feedback on performance after each task, and will now look at educational applications of game-like technologies differently. I am now convinced that assessment must be frequent, and just as in a video game, there must be regular, ongoing opportunities for students to monitor their progress and connect the effort they expend to their performance and progress.

In summation, the lessons I learned in the *Teaching with Technology* class have changed my attitude towards instructional applications for video gaming technology strategies, improved my online leadership and collaboration skills, and left me with a new respect for teachers who have to find innovative methods to deal with such a wide variety of student skill levels and abilities.

This assignment is due no later than 11:59 p.m. of the seventh day of Week 5 of this course.

Your Wiki's URL	http://listentothentatives.wikispaces.com/EDLD+5364+Teaching+with+Technology+Course+Reflection
Time and Date of Your Update	2:00am 12/20/09